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INFO RUEHXX/ARAB ISRAELI COLLECTIVE PRIORITY  
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UNCLAS JERUSALEM 001458

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE  
SIPDIS

NEA FOR FRONT OFFICE; NEA/IPA FOR  
WILLIAMS/SHAMPAINE/BELGRADE; NSC FOR ABRAMS/WATERS

E.O. 12958: N/A  
TAGS: [EAGR](#) [ECON](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [KPAL](#) [KWBG](#) [IS](#) [JO](#)  
SUBJECT: SNAPSHOT: NABLUS AREA ECONOMY LIMITED BY  
POORLY-RUN CHECKPOINTS

1. (SBU) ConGenOffs traveled on July 12 and 13 throughout the areas surrounding the West Bank cities of Tubas, Nablus, Salfit, and Qalqiliya for a snap-shot view of the movement and access issues facing Palestinians. Several truck loads of freshly-picked Jordan Valley vegetables waited in a four-to-six hour long line to pass through al-Badhan checkpoint, which is located between the agriculturally-rich governorate of Tubas and the city of Nablus. Nearby residents said that this wait occurs every day. An area store owner said that traffic was normal July 12, as was the wait at the nearby checkpoint. Due to the checkpoints, a trip by truck from Tubas to Ramallah takes around six to seven hours, while the trip to Amman takes roughly 12 hours - four times more than the same trips eight years ago, according to several residents.

2. (SBU) ConGenOffs observed July 13 that a number of Palestinian villages north of Ramallah and south of Nablus remained closed off from major access roads. Berms, boulders and gates placed by the IDF prevented Palestinians in these areas from reaching main roads or moving between nearby villages.

Lack Of Consistent  
Handling At Checkpoints  
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3. (SBU) Many Israeli soldiers at the checkpoints did not use hand-signals or give clear instruction to vehicles waiting for passage. ConGenOffs observed that the soldiers' practices were often inconsistent and confusing. ConGenOffs observed IDF soldiers requesting Palestinian men to exit their cars and taxis for questioning. These men were left standing in lines on the side of the road. During passage through the Nablus-area Huwwara checkpoint, as the Israeli soldiers questioned the U.S. staff regarding their travels in the area, one of the soldiers shouldered his rifle and pointed it at the vehicle's rear door window, asking the U.S. staff whether it was really bulletproof.

Barrier Construction Moves  
Forward Near Ariel Settlement  
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4. (SBU) Israeli separation barrier construction surrounding the Ariel and Emmanual settlements continues. In what resembles the construction of a four-lane highway, land has been cleared and finely graded in preparation for the actual separation barrier's construction.  
WALLES